

These Germans, who decided to excavate the hill of Megiddo, did not have any great amount of money at their disposal. Consequently they used the method of digging trenches. They would dig trenches deep into the hill, and try from them to learn something of the civilization of different periods.

Nowadays excavators do not like the trench method. One trench may be dug to get a brief idea of stratification, but excavation is usually done by digging areas rather than trenches, since a trench open too small a section from each period and can often be confusing instead of helpful.

When I visited Megiddo in 1929, I looked down into one of the trenches that the Germans had dug early in the century. It had rained shortly before and the dust had been cleared away from the side of the trench. It was easy to see in the trench a part of the foundation of eighteen cities, one above the other. The German excavators rightly decided that the fourth city from the top was the city of the time of Solomon.

These excavators were not men who accepted the Bible as true and dependable. They believed that monotheism had been unknown until the time of the later prophets. It was their idea that at the time of Solomon the Israelities were polytheists. It was customary, at that period whenever a column was found, to think of it as a symbol of some ancient religion. A little later, Prof. Andrae, a famous German archaeologist, proved that the great majority of the columns that have been found from ancient times have nothing to do with any particular religion, but are in most instances simply a means of holding up the second story of the houses. However, this was, before Andrae's time and these excavators felt that a square column they had found in this fourth layer from the top must be a symbol of an ancient religion.

An interesting problem faced them. The column had a hole running across obliquely from one side to the adjoining side. It was hard to see the purpose of this hole. It certainly was not a means of carrying away the blood of a sacrifice, because the column was much too tall to be an altar, and anyway the hole was perfectly level and did not reach the top of the column, but went from one side to the other.

The problem remained in this situation for about twenty years. Then John D. Rockefeller, Jr. gave a total of over twelve million dollars to the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago for excavation in the Near East. Among the projects that the Oriental Institute undertook was a thorough excavation of Megiddo. The entire hill was purchased, and a modern efficient expedition headquarters was built. The new expedition undertook to examine the hill thoroughly, not using the old outmoded trench system but carefully excavating a large area. A hill like this, where eighteen cities have existed, one above the other, is somewhat like an onion. One can peel off layer after layer, if the work is done with care. It was decided to excavate half of the city. The uppermost stratum was uncovered, examined, photographed and carefully studied. Then the entire top city was removed and the second city was cleared. After it had been studied, the same was done with the third city.

When I visited Megiddo in 1929, the fourth layer had been uncovered, on half of the mound. At this time I was on a horse-back trip with a group of scholars, visiting ancient Palestinian sites. We were fortunate in reaching Megiddo just before the new season of excavation was to commence. Everything was in readiness and the workers were due to arrive at Megiddo the next day, so Dr. Guy, the Director had ample leisure to conduct us around the mound, and to explain everything to us. He referred to the various conjectures that had been made, twenty years before, about the strange column that had been found. Then he pointed out that the new excavation had uncovered many similar square columns, all arranged according to a definite plan, and each having a hole cut through obliquely from one side to the adjoining one. The columns stood in rows. Each row was faced by another similar row of columns, a few feet away. Some little distance back of each of these rows there was a wall. A large part of the mound consisted of this sort of layout. As we looked at it, Dr. Guy said, "It